

# Memorandum

**To:** Tom McDonnell, Chief  
Division of Mass Transportation

**Date:** January 13, 2003

**From:** **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
**DIVISION OF MASS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM – M.S. #39**  
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**Subject:** **EVALUATION OF DOT'S**

## **OBJECTIVE**

Contrast other DOT's transit functions with the Department's transit function to identify activities that could be employed to assist the Department in achieving the goal of flexibility and making transit a more practical travel option.

## **DISCUSSION**

A nationwide survey of a sample of DOT's was conducted - 11 states were surveyed ranging in size from 3,421,399 (Oregon) to 21,325,018 (Texas). The survey revealed that all those other state DOT's are actively involved in promoting transit usage in their states. The survey results are summarized in the attached matrix. Significant findings from the survey are:

- **Size Comparison**  
Although California is by far the largest state surveyed, (state population 34,501,130) and has the largest number of public transit operators by far (497) and the largest DOT (23,400) we fall short compared to all other states surveyed in the area of advocating for increased transit use, even though we have a set goal of tripling transit trips by 2025.
- **Annual Report**  
All other states surveyed produce an annual report that illustrates the structure/overview of the department, major accomplishments/highlights for the year, public transit operator information and transit statistics. California does not.

The staff time required by other DOT's to prepare the annual report varies from one to ten dedicated staff depending on the comprehensiveness of the report. The time frame varies from one month to nine months. The data sources for the report are various DOT databases and transit operators.

- **Marketing Program**  
All states surveyed are actively involved in advocating for transit by way of some pretty slick materials such as CD's that contain short movies, camera ready art for print ads and busboards, and public service announcements in the form of short videos and 30-second commercials. Illinois modeled their marketing campaign (including Vision 2020) from the State of Wisconsin.

Most of the DOT's use slogans to promote transit ridership. Some examples include:

1. "Relax. There's more than one way to get there."
2. "Your Ride is Here"
3. "32 passengers, 1 tailpipe – riding the bus reduces pollution"
4. "You look lonely, vanpooling is a happy thing"
5. "Hey you on the bike. Thanks – riding a bike reduces traffic"

The only ad campaign that Caltrans markets is the nationally recognized "Slow for the Cone Zone". We currently do no marketing directly related to increasing transit usage.

- **Organization**

The organizational structure of the state DOT's surveyed varies in regards to the reporting relationship of the transit function to the Director. In most states, there is a "Deputy Level" Public Transportation function reporting directly to the Director. In those states the "Transit Division" reports to the "Public Transportation Deputy". In Caltrans, the deputy – level function is split between transit, and the other modal and planning divisions.

- **Innovative Programs**

A variety of new innovative programs have been implemented to address the emerging issues affecting the delivery of transit services. Some of these programs include:

1. Each fall, prior to Maryland's winter/spring legislative session, the Secretary of MDOT visits each county in the state at which time a workshop is held with the state and local elected officials from the county to discuss transit issues.
2. The State of Maryland (pop. 5,375,156) has a 30-minute monthly cable show, and a weekly talk radio program which highlights Maryland's mass transit system and its programs, as well as an interactive CD showing all of their transit systems.
3. The State of Illinois (pop. 12,482,301) uses a catchy phrase "Your Ride is Here" with lots of print ads on CD format as well as a video with a 30-second commercial spot advocating bus ridership.
4. The State of Florida (pop. 16,396,515) has a CD on "Performance Evaluation of Florida's Transit Systems". They also produced a transit video entitled "Moving People on Public Transportation in Florida".
5. The State of Washington (pop. 5,987,973) has a ton of great ideas of getting folks out of their vehicles. Their campaign is called "Relax. There's More Than One Way To Get There".

6. The State of Pennsylvania (pop. 12,287,150) in addition to producing several transit-related statistical reports has a very well put together video entitled "Transportation Options...The Choice is Yours".

If that's not enough, they place decals on all the vehicles that are purchased by PENNDOT stating "Public Transportation Supported by PENNDOT". These are placed on all the vehicles that are owned and supported by PENNDOT. **This effort is to communicate to the public that the commonwealth of PA strongly supports public transportation.**

7. The State of Colorado (pop. 4,417,714) has a new resident program that sends surveys out to new residents regarding transit. Once they complete the form and return it, they receive free ride coupons.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Annual Report

The California Department of Transportation should produce an annual report to showcase what we do as a department to support transit and other modes of public transportation. Noteworthy transit projects should be showcased, and public transit operator information and transit statistics should also be listed. This information could be presented at statewide conferences, local meetings, in-house training sessions, special target-group presentations, and be available to be sent out upon request.

- Marketing

Caltrans should develop a statewide multi-media marketing program that would include workshops, television shows, radio spots, compact disks, video, public service announcements and print ads to promote transit usage. The program should be developed in partnership with APTA and our regional and local transit partners.

In-house staff is available to develop this program, building upon existing materials currently available from APTA, other state DOT's, MPO's and RTPA's, and transit operators. Cost of developing and implementing the program could be shared among the partners.

1. Name Recognition -

One fairly easy way to get name recognition is to have facilities and equipment with the CT logo produced to identify products and services owned/operated by Caltrans i.e., Amber Alert System.

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2. Vehicle Decals -

Produce and distribute decals to be placed on the doors or sides of vehicles purchased through Caltrans, similar to PENNDOT, which say "Public Transportation Supported by Caltrans".

In order to achieve the new goals of the Department, Caltrans needs to realign our functions and refocus on developing partnerships to be more proactive in advocating for transit.

By adopting these recommendations, we can live up to our claim of being a leader in transportation and truly improve mobility across California.